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THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK

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THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK

BEING THE SERMONS OF AN ECONOMIST

BY
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THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK

IN TROUBLOUS TIMES

St. Paul's Church, Birmingham, 1920

IN the midst of the perplexities which beset us, I think I cannot do better than try to set before you what seem to me the fundamental thoughts of the New Testament, and then ask whether we can make these thoughts our own.

The central idea of the New Testament has its meaning blunted to us by the very familiarity of the language in which it is expressed in the Bible and in the services of the Christian church. But is it not simply this: that the innermost purpose of the God Whom our Lord proclaimed is to overcome evil? The Gospels do not attempt to give us an explanation of the origin of evil: philosophers of all ages and theologians of more than one period have attempted to do so; but, if you will reflect, you will remember that the great creeds of the church—the Apostles' Creed, which is recited in Morning

and Evening Prayer, and the Nicene Creed, recited at the Communion—are entirely reticent on the subject. The creed at the Communion tells us of the earthly meaning of the life of Jesus : it was “for us men and for our salvation”. We know we need salvation from evil in ourselves and around us : we cannot fail to know it, when we have had some experience of life. And in this the creeds are like the Gospels : they also do not philosophize about the ultimate meaning of evil. They start from the recognition of its actual presence in the world, and assure us that there is a Power whose essential nature is opposed to it—a Power with whom we men and women are called upon to co-operate, a Power which will ultimately triumph. The teaching of the New Testament is not that of certain Oriental religions which has sometimes crept into Christianity—that evil is to be escaped by leaving it alone, to continue to do its work, while the soul escapes to some blessed sphere of untainted calm, whether in this life or in some other. Still less is it that moral judgments, the difference between right and wrong, helpful and harmful, are without any ultimate justification in the nature of the universe. No ; the New Testament view is that evil is an actual

fact which we are called upon, by our very manhood and womanhood, to battle against. And from this arises the fundamental Christian conception of God. Do you remember how in the Litany we turn to God and look to Him to "deliver us" from "the evils which the craft and subtlety of devil or man worketh against us"? and we express the expectation that He will indeed do this "for" His "honour." That is an arresting phrase: the *honour* of the God we believe in is involved in the struggle; He is like a commander who cannot, for honour's sake, abandon his men, a captain who cannot leave the bridge. But the writer who is known as St. John had a deeper thought still: not the honour only, the very being of God is involved. That is what is meant by the wonderful saying, "God is Love": not that there is simply a God Who, among other qualities, is loving, as a friend might be loving; His love, i.e. His active goodwill toward us, being, as it were, a separable attribute. When we say "God is Love," we should mean infinitely more than this. We should mean that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, the key to all this perplexing scene,

"The burden and the mystery
Of all this unintelligible world,"

as Woodsworth puts it, is a beneficent purpose, and a purpose which the human reason can recognize as, in some comprehensible sense, a moral one. And in the sorest times the Christian church has never abandoned the conviction that this purpose will finally be accomplished. In various imagery it has looked forward to what Tennyson has written of as

“one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves”;

when “God shall be all in all,” and “the kingdoms of this world” shall have become “the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.”

The saying “God is Love,” comes from the writing which we know as the first Epistle of St. John. This was one of the last books to be written among those which were afterwards collected to form the New Testament: it shows us how the Christian message presented itself when the permanent meaning of our Lord’s teaching had been disentangled from the temporary associations of the first group of His followers. Listen again, then, to the way in which this writer interprets the mission of our Lord:

“For this purpose the Son of God was mani-

fested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

The sense of the passage may perhaps come to us more freshly in a modern translation :

"This is why the Son of God appeared, to destroy the deeds of the devil."

We call our Lord, and with reason, "the Son of God" : but the same writer reminds us that we also in our measure are "sons of God" ; and, as he views it, the purpose of our Lord's life on earth is the purpose of our life on earth too ; for, "as He is, so are we, in this world."

That the forces of evil are personified in this and some other passages in the New Testament need not distract our attention from the root idea. It does not in the least matter if this personification entered into the Hebrew religion during the Captivity, and so later into Christianity, from the sacred writings of Persia. We may regard it as Persia's part in the providential education of the human race first to realize, vividly and persistently, the contest between Good and Evil as the ground plot of the world's drama. But the New Testament writers are concerned infinitely more with visible wickedness than with mythological fancies about it ;

the language they use is evidently poetical and figurative ; used simply as the current form of speech to designate facts which all could see. And so, to-day, we need have no theory of the origin of evil ; we know only too well what we mean when we call an action " devilish."

The fact is, however, that the only attempt by a New Testament writer to work out a conscious theory of moral evil is in harmony with the most modern science. It is Paul's doctrine of " the law in our members warring against the law in our mind." This doctrine is the " intuition," we may say using secular language, of a " great religious genius," who had found it hard himself to arrive at inner tranquillity. But the same thought has been pressed upon us, and made indeed painfully real, by modern Darwinism. If mankind, as we have reason to believe, has slowly emerged from millions of years of existence on lower planes of purely animal life, how vast a range of human failure and suffering finds in such a fact a ready explanation ! If our task—to quote Tennyson again—is to

" work out the Beast,
And let the Ape and Tiger die "

within us, until man is finally master of himself

and his will freed from its animal inheritance, how astoundingly appropriate is the apostle's prophetic vision of the time when "we shall all come unto a perfect man!" that is—for this is the sense of the phrase—the time when humanity will reach maturity. And where, with the Gospels before us, can we find a higher example of what mankind is capable than what the same Paul goes on to call "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"—in modern translation, "the full measure of development which belongs to Christ"?

Amid all that is doubtful, this much is recognized by modern scholars: that in the life and teaching of Jesus a new note sounded in the world, the note of "redeeming activity"—of active, compassionate, sympathetic endeavour to lift the burdens from men's lives and consciences. And in that sense—in the sense of what Jesus was and what He stands for—can we desire anything better than that—as we are singing this evening—

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run"?

Dr. Watts was sometimes a true poet. "O God, our help in ages past," has, during the

trials of the last six years, become our national anthem, when we are trying to be our best selves. And this hymn, also, appeals to most of us by its universality. For we are all "the sons of want"—want spiritual, intellectual, material; and we most of us know in our hearts that in sober truth

"Blessings abound where'er He reigns."

But now let us remind ourselves of this accompanying and persistent idea in the New Testament—that the following of Christ in the fight against evil, in ourselves and in our environment, cannot but be accompanied by suffering. It is the paradox of the Christian life, that its two notes are Joy and Suffering; that the Christian can at the same time address Duty, as Wordsworth does, as "stern lawgiver," and yet say:

"Nor know we anything so fair,
As is the smile upon thy face."

It was the same Jesus Who said: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," who also said, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him take up his cross." And the same Paul who delights in telling of the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace," also reminds us that we can only fully

realize our brotherhood with Christ "if so be that we suffer with Him."

But notice this: the idea that the accomplishment of the Divine plan involves suffering, and even apparent defeat sometimes, is an idea which mankind has always found it very hard to rise to. You remember how, when our Lord confided to His disciples His expectation that, if He went up to deliver His message in Jerusalem, He "must suffer many things," Peter remonstrated with Him for anticipating trouble. In such a frame of mind, which refuses to face realities, our Lord perceived a main cause of failure. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" He ejaculated. Are not most of us still Peters? We imagine we have a right, either to "a good time," or, if trouble comes, to some quick, dramatic intervention. Not content to give our best judgment to discern our duty, and then our best strength to do it, and have faith that, somehow, "all things will work together for good," we "seek for a sign from heaven." Yet we are told that such a demand caused our Master to "sigh deeply in His spirit," and solemnly assure His hearers "there shall no sign be given to this generation."

"The Jews require a sign," says Paul—and

is not that what many irreligious and some religious people still look for? Although our Lord expressly told us that God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," our thoughts are still so pagan that we would fain demand that the order of physical nature should be set on one side for our benefit. "And the Greeks seek after wisdom," Paul goes on: the intellect craves for some philosophy which shall somehow explain evil, or explain it away. But it was Paul's conviction, and it will surely help us if we can make it our own, that the world's deliverance can only be attained through pain of body and agony of spirit, and what at the moment may seem irremediable disaster. "We proclaim," he says, "a Christ Who has been crucified."

It is possible some of you may say: "No doubt this is all in the New Testament, but can it be proved to be true?" No, it cannot be conclusively proved to be the only right view of the Universe, in the sense that a mathematical proposition can be proved. No accumulation of merely intellectual arguments can prove the existence of a good God, beyond the possibility of doubt. Christianity is essentially an attitude and a temper: an attitude of confidence that

somehow the Universe has a good meaning, a temper of determination to help our fellow-men. Such an attitude is not inconsistent with the large lessons of human evolution, as taught us by modern science ; and it is conducive to progress, as our reason conceives it. But let us be frank ; to adopt such an attitude requires a venture of faith. It is as true now as when Paul wrote to the Romans that “ we are saved ”—our inner selves are placed in salutary relations to the Universe—“ by hope,” “ and hope that is seen is not hope.” And yet there is this confirmation by experience. Such an attitude and such a temper do bring men inward satisfaction. Men and women in all ages, who have “ come to Jesus,” in this sense of “ learning of Him ” to share in His outlook and in His endeavour, have found “ rest unto their souls.” We dare not claim to be “ righteous,” and we know we are not as “ true-hearted ” as we might be ; but yet, in the degree in which men and women have tried to be these things, the verse we have sung to-night from the psalmist is continually verified :

“ There *is* sprung up a light for the righteous :
And joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.”

CITIZENSHIP

Harborne Parish Church, Birmingham, 1917

“That Peace and Happiness, Truth and Justice,
Religion and Piety may be established among us.”

—*Prayer for the High Court of Parliament.*

THE attitude of Christian men and women towards human society has greatly varied. There have been many, in all ages, who have shut themselves up within a narrow conception of personal goodness and devout living, and have withdrawn their interest from the civil society in the midst of which they have been dwelling. This mental attitude has made its appearance under the most diverse conditions. It was the spirit of that monasticism which, “leaving human wrongs to right themselves, cared but to pass into the silent life.” It has been equally the spirit of thousands in the Protestant churches who have been satisfied with an individual salvation and have failed to recognize the religious claims of citizenship. In its coarser forms such individualism had produced an “other-worldliness” which is justly abhorrent to the modern mind; in its finer forms—in the

cloister, in Quietist and Pietist circles, in the good women in our slums to-day, who "keep themselves to themselves"—it has produced types of character full of beauty and attraction.

Nevertheless, individualism, while an essential part of Christianity, is not—experience, I think, has shown it—a complete or adequate Christianity. Christianity, though in its origin an Oriental religion, is distinguished from the characteristic religions of the East, such as Hinduism or Buddhism, by its determination not to give up this world as irredeemably bad. In the "manner" of prayer taught us by our Master we begin, indeed, by humbling ourselves before the Divinity from Whom we spring, and Whose dwelling is remote from human sense. But we do not stop there. We go on immediately to give utterance to the aspiration that the Divine Kingdom—"all we have willed, or hoped, or dreamt of good"—may come on earth, and that the Divine Will, which we believe to be love, may here also find its realization. And from that Christian aspiration springs the Christian duty.

However it came there, it is a hard fact that there is evil, physical and moral, in the world. And if we sum up everything at variance with

the thought of a God who is Love in the more or less mythological term "the Devil," we may speak of all the manifold forms of evil as "the works of the Devil." The very object, as Christians believe, of the life of Jesus was, not that He should pass through evil personally unscathed, but that He might "destroy the works of the Devil"; and we are signed with His cross in baptism "in token that we shall not be ashamed," or too self-centred, "manfully to fight under His banner."

The root principle, then, is clear; the impulse is given; the way in which it is to be followed must be determined by a reasonable judgment, according to changing circumstances.

There have been those who, feeling intensely that it was the duty of Christians to promote goodness here, in this world, have held that it was the duty and right of the church—by which, in practice, they commonly meant the clergy—to rule the world, to control that organization of the "secular" side of life which we call the State; and this not by moral suasion only, but by a defined and recognized authority, enforced by penalties which, though in theory spiritual, were in fact very material. In this respect history places men in strange company,

for the conception of a secular world ruled by the church was shared by the greatest of the Popes with the greatest of the reforming theologians.

On the other hand, there have been those who have thought that as civil legislation is progressively moralized, as the State takes over one duty after another performed in the past by the church, such as education and the relief of the poor, there will be a decreasing need for a church separately organized; so that when the ideal State of the future is established, and "that great city, the heavenly Jerusalem," has indeed "descended out of heaven," we shall see "no temple therein."

It is sufficient for us to say that now, and probably for centuries to come, State and Church, the states and the churches, exist and will exist side by side. Nor should we hesitate to say that, with the Christian, what is represented—often with sad imperfections—by "the Church" must in idea take precedence. To give the State precedence, to make its claims supreme, is to revert to the principles of Greek society four centuries before Christ—principles which subsequent experience showed could not cope with the moral problems of a developing

humanity. The intervening centuries have been full of the tragic mistakes of Christian people ; nevertheless, we are not yet in a position in which we can afford to disregard their lesson : that mankind needs for its truest well-being a standard of right and wrong, a stronghold of conscience, outside of and critical of the organization of material force known as the State. This is sufficiently proved by the terrible results of the deification of the State in modern German philosophy. The duty of the Christian is not to grovel before the state, and not to ignore it ; but rather actively to interest himself in it, and do what he can to make use of its machinery for the furtherance of social well-being. In this sense a good Christian should always be a good citizen.

Among the ways in which the English Church, in its corporate capacity, has expressed this Christian attitude towards the state are what are known as "the State prayers." These prayers are closely bound up with the political development of the English people. The Collects for the King in the Communion Service were composed at a time when the King not only reigned but governed ; when "the strong monarchy" of the Tudor sovereigns was thank-

fully acquiesced in by the great body of the people as a necessary security against violence and anarchy. One of them speaks of the nation as committed to the King's "charge," the other prays that his subjects may "humbly obey him." When we repeat these prayers to-day we unconsciously and quite properly translate them mentally into harmony with the spirit of our present constitution.

Next to the King the most important part of the system of government, in the days when our Prayer Book was first drawn up, was the Privy Council. It was in the Council that most of the important decisions were arrived at concerning national policy; it was the Council which controlled the whole of the administration. Parliament was valued by the Government as a source of information and as a convenient method of enlisting popular support; but it bulked far less largely than the Council in the minds of intelligent observers. Accordingly two petitions for the Council were introduced—one for the King's "whole Council" in the Prayer for the Church Militant and one for "the Lords of the Council" in the Litany; and this more than a century before any prayer for Parliament was provided. It was not until

the revision of 1661, when it was recognized no less by the victorious Cavaliers than by the defeated Commonwealth men that the government of England in future was going to be a Parliamentary one, that the beautiful prayer to which I have directed your attention was permanently added to our public devotions.

In the central words of this prayer, "Peace and Happiness, Truth and Justice, Religion and Piety" are set before us as the objects to be aimed at by the "endeavours" of Parliament; and, if by Parliament, obviously by our own endeavours also. Around each of these words there has for centuries been superabundant controversy. But the prayer was composed for the use of plain people; and plain people will find substantial guidance in it, if they really wish for guidance.

"Peace"—if we may take the words in the order in which they are here presented—is one of the great words of our religion. And, as with all great words, the corruption of the best is the worst that can happen. It has, indeed, happened in two ways. Because there is a spiritual peace—a "peace of God which passeth all understanding"—which can be enjoyed in the midst of all earthly discord and tumult,

men and women have too often been content with an inward personal feeling of comfort and confidence, and have thought of things outside as merely "secular." There is perhaps not much of this feeling left nowadays; and it is abundantly clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that "peace on earth," in the quite simple and obvious sense of those words, is alike the Christian hope and the Christian objective. To "seek peace" and, what is more, "pursue it," forms part of that summary of a good man's duty which is given in one of the Psalms and quoted in one of the Epistles.

But when this is recognized, the other danger arises, and this is a danger into which ecclesiastics, and not ecclesiastics alone, have been prone to fall—the danger of laying excessive stress on mere quiet and orderliness. External peace is in itself a good thing, but not the peace of abject submission or of acquiescence in evil. Than the promotion of peace in this sense there are higher duties. The application of this thought to warfare is obvious enough. But it applies to peace at home just as truly.

Tennyson has been blamed for saying that "the blessings of peace" can be made "a

curse" by "lust of gain." Yet he did but repeat the cry of Jeremiah. We may "say 'Peace, Peace' when there is no peace," for peace does but "lightly" or superficially "heal the hurt" of the people when society is given over to "covetousness." Peace we can pray for only as it is combined with "happiness, truth, and justice."

It was indeed a fortunate inspiration which combined in this prayer the intensely Biblical word Peace with the great word of secular philosophy Happiness. You may remember that in one of the most important documents in history, the Declaration of American Independence, "the pursuit of happiness" is declared to be an "inalienable right" of all men. Here, again, we could argue round and about the word till we "find no end, in wandering mazes lost." Yet, in fact, this is a word we all use in ordinary life in much the same sense. We use it for innocent pleasure, for that sense of cheerful well-being which comes from what we recognize to be the rightful satisfaction of human instincts. We all realize, for instance, that among the sources of happiness family life is the most abundant. Every improvement in the condition of the body of the people which favours a healthy home-life facilitates happiness ;

and, but for the gloomy religion which has too often passed for Christianity in the past, one would think that Christians need not be reminded that simple human happiness is an immense good in itself, and that it is a Christian duty to promote it.

Next comes Truth, and truth in this connection we may translate by knowledge in its widest sense. Truth (*Veritas*) is appropriately the motto of the greatest of American universities. Truth, however disagreeable or disconcerting, we are bound to follow after, not only as thinking men and women, but also as Christians; we are also bound, however—and this is a business which requires sober judgment—to “speak the truth in love.”

With the difficult quest of Truth the prayer associates the difficult quest of Justice. We may be grateful to the men of 1661 for bringing back this word into English religion. In the Latin translation of the Bible which formed the basis of the services of the Church down to the Reformation, the words afterwards translated in the Authorized Version “righteousness” were translated “*justitia*,” justice. Thus, in the Psalms we had “Justice and Peace have kissed each other,” and in the Proverbs “Justice

exalteth a nation." We may have gained in the New Testament by the substitution of "righteousness," which seems to carry a more inward meaning with it ; but in other parts of the Bible we have perhaps lost ; for "righteousness" has, unfortunately, ceased to be a word of current daily speech, and when used at all is often used in too narrow and self-centred a sense.

The duty of the Christian is to promote Justice. The cry of out-of-work demonstrators, "Confound your charity, give us justice"—though it is harsh and bitter, and assumes that justice is easier to discover in all its fullness than it really is—voices a deep fact : that intelligent men and women crave for fair treatment even more than for kindness. We Christians must hold fast the hope that human affairs can ultimately be so ordered that a great part of our existing "charity," in the everyday sense of the word, and whether "organized" or not, will become unnecessary.

The recognition of our duty, however, by no means makes its execution easy. The most famous of all definitions of Justice is "a constant and perpetual will to give to each man his right" or due. And what is a man's right or due we may

well hesitate to define. A mistaken or ambiguous doctrine on this head, such as that involved in the claim on behalf of "labour" to "the whole produce of labour," may positively retard progress. What Justice is the world will only gradually discern and gradually bring to pass. Yet I am sure that the average man and woman has already a conception of Justice which, if only they would carry it out, would, without any legislative revolution, make this world a very much brighter place.

Of Religion and Piety I need not speak here. They are the themes of every Christian pulpit. But I cannot ignore them. Men and women cannot find the completest satisfaction for their better selves without a sense of dependence upon the Eternal, nor without Worship and Fellowship.

About a century after this prayer was placed in our Prayer Book a view came to be promulgated which, when completely accepted, made "endeavours" on the part of Parliament or of the individual citizen to bring about social well-being, so far at any rate as it rests on a material basis, appear unnecessary and even pernicious. This was the doctrine of the economists, according to which competition, the pursuit of our individual interests, was the

“natural” means of securing, if not an ideal society, at any rate better social conditions than could be produced by the “interference” of the State or philanthropists. They believed that every individual, by “intending only his own gain,” was—as Adam Smith reverently said—“led by an Invisible Hand”—that is by God, “to promote an end which was no part of his” immediate “intention”—namely, “the public good.” That view, as the all-sufficient key to the problem of human society, has at last been abandoned by all serious thinkers. They recognize, after painful experience, that individual competition, with “every man for himself,” is not always the field of operation of an Invisible Divine Hand, but often one where the Devil takes the hindmost—and in a real sense, only too frequently, the foremost too.

What the economists had to teach of permanent value was that the business of government is more complicated than we are apt to suppose; that there are unexpected reactions; that because a particular thing is right in itself it does not follow it can be enforced immediately and directly. But this consideration does not absolve the Christian from the duty of an active and unselfish care for the public weal.

All around us there is talk of reconstruction ; and indeed there will be need for it after the war, though the war itself is already doing a great deal of reconstruction, some of it likely to be permanent. I am not one of those who view the future with grave alarm. I do not think there is serious danger of social revolution ; and I cannot but feel that he who writes or speaks as if there were is doing an ill service to his country. But we shall certainly want all our Christian sympathy and imagination and patience. We shall need to cling fast to the great lessons taught us by this war—that public interests are more important than private, and often inconsistent with them, and that, when we are bent first and foremost on serving our nation, party and class spirit stands in the way. And we cannot do better than repeat the words of another of our State prayers—"Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great danger " we may be in "by unhappy divisions." "Take away all hatred and prejudice and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

COMBINATION

Bristol Cathedral, 1919

I HAVE been given the opportunity to speak this evening on the industrial situation. I do not suppose a text is needed: if it be, for every address of this kind to an audience which regards Jesus of Nazareth as in any sense its Master, the words of our Lord's prayer will always be sufficient: "Thy Will be done in earth." We shall deceive ourselves if we suppose it an easy matter to discern what that Will may be; that is to say, what form of society and what relations between the individuals who compose it will be the best employment of the human reason and of the environment in which it finds itself placed. And though we can progressively discern the Divine Purpose—as I believe we can—we cannot expect, at once and without anxious thought, to discover the means and stages of its realization. Nevertheless, the petition should serve continually to remind us that Christianity is this-worldly as well as other-worldly; that the vision of an ideal society, which it is our duty to bring

about, is not a humanitarian or secular conception, outside, or opposed to, the Christian faith, but an essential part of the Christian faith itself, as the Christian church should always have understood it.

Let me, then, lay before you some of the reflections on the industrial situation which have emerged in my own mind from my lifelong work as a student of the history of labour.

The conclusion which all those who have seriously examined the industrial development of the last hundred and fifty years are bound to lay stress upon is this: that the chief road, in this generation, to the improvement of industrial relations, lies through combination, alike of work-people and of employers. I do not say the only road. There is much room for improvement to be brought about by the direct operation, on each side, of the very simplest Christian motives. I shall not try, now, and in this place, to read moral lessons to the work-people; their own most trusted leaders have often done this far more effectively. It is more appropriate for me to turn in the other direction. While there are many and an increasing number of what may fairly be called "model establishments," there is plenty of room

still in many places for the betterment of working conditions ; and for such a betterment as would quickly be brought about if all employers would ask themselves whether the workshop accommodation for which they are responsible is such as they would like themselves continuously to work in. I do not pretend that improvement will always be easy. I know what is said : that the work-people do not always value what is provided for them. But difficulty does not exempt those in a position of industrial control—and I would include therein all large shareholders—from a primary Christian duty. Our Lord's words may perhaps strike us with a new force if we quote them from the best modern translation :

“ Whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them.”

I would not dream of denying that there is much also that can be done by the arm of the State. The factory legislation of England, while one of the saddest, is also one of the most encouraging chapters in our history—sad, because the evils were so terrible and their remedy so long delayed ; encouraging, because, after all, the national conscience did awaken and

England led the way for other countries. There is doubtless still room for much more state control; not removing the forces of competition, but raising the plane on which they are allowed to operate. During the war much that has been done in the way of regulation has been clumsy and ineffective; but we must recognize that, on the whole, the control of our economic life by the state has had an unexpected success. I must confess that, little as I revered the bare principle of industrial competition, I long doubted the feasibility of much, especially with respect to food, which has since proved quite practicable. But this must be added: government control has worked well during the war because the whole nation has felt a common interest and a common duty. To make similar regulation work equally well in peace times a like sense of common duty would have to be supplied. In speculating as to the future I would assign hardly any limits to what the state may advantageously undertake *when the situation is ripe for it*; though I do not anticipate that the state will ever become omnipotent, or that it will eradicate the craving for individual possession and the impulse toward individual enterprise which are

quite as deeply rooted as the social instinct in ordinary human nature.

In our own time, however, and for the period on which we are now entering, the main road, I repeat, to an improvement of industrial relations lies through industrial organization. *On the whole*—I emphasize the qualification—it is desirable that, in every trade employing more than a handful of men and women, all the work-people should be in a trade union or unions and all the employers in an association. There must remain hard questions of conscience; occasions may arise, in the life of an employer or of a workman, in which he would be justified in refusing to join, or to abide by the decision of, a trade association. The moral imperative must always remain: “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” And there are questions eagerly discussed in labour circles to-day as to the scope of unionism; whether it should be by crafts or industries. To such questions there can hardly be a uniform answer: for workmen’s interests are still divergent in this respect and are often conflicting in the minds of the individual workers. But I repeat: the presumption, after all the experience of more than a century, is on the side of combination in some shape or

other, not only as a means of forwarding the immediate interests of the parties directly concerned, but even more as the necessary basis for more harmonious relations between employers and employed, and the instrument for securing substantial social advance. The normal duty of every Christian to-day is to join a trade union or an employers' association, and to do all that lies in his power to influence its policy in reasonable directions. The self-centred view of religion which leads a man to shut himself up in the narrow circle of his home, and to leave the sordid affairs of the outside world to coarser and less scrupulous natures, is largely responsible for the evils we have in our minds when we contemptuously refer to "mere politics," whether national or municipal; and it will be the same in industry. It is comparatively easy, and not particularly meritorious, to keep oneself "unspotted from the world," if one shuns it. The more attractive course for the courageous is to take one's fair share in the necessary work of human society, where prizes are to be gained "not without dust and heat," as Milton says.

In this direction it must be confessed that working men have led the way. The annals of trade unionism, since the first introduction of

machinery, have been a story of spontaneous development in response to new industrial requirements, in the face of the frowns of the recognized economic authorities of the day; a story also of unselfish devotion to a common cause; and this must be acknowledged in spite of all the distressing mistakes in the conduct of the movement and even of the violence which has sometimes attended it. It is broad-based on the principle of democracy; and democracy can only work through the machinery which the members of the society, by whatever majority they think necessary, set up—whether it be executive council, or delegate meeting, or ballot.

Attempts are now being made, in more than one country, to substitute for the democratic government of the nation or the trade what is variously known as a *proletariat dictatorship* or as the *direct action* of a *class-conscious minority*. I cannot believe that the great body of trade unionists in this country are at all likely to allow the organizations so toilsomely built up through generations to be scrapped, and to be replaced by what, after all, however well intentioned, would, in the exact sense of the word, be an oligarchy.

On the many reasons why combination, on

the part alike of work-people and employers, is socially desirable, let me single out only this. It is the prerequisite for the joint councils or conferences or boards, representing the two sides of the wages contract, which—in the judgment of the most experienced men in both camps—are the urgent need of the present industrial situation.

I do not propose to speak at any length on the vastly important issues which the very mention of *Whitley Councils* must at once suggest to you. I will only make two remarks: first, that the mere existence of a joint board or conference is not a panacea—as we should have learnt from the too frequent breakdown in critical times of boards already established; and that, nevertheless, what we may call the Whitley policy is the direction in which we can still look with most hope. Secondly, that the cause of joint councils is sometimes injured by a too superficial presentation of the problem, as if all trades were easily defined and self-contained units. In some important instances they are indeed sharply delimited. But in others—and these not unimportant—there are, as I have already hinted, difficult questions as to the area and scope of the several organizations

and as to the effect of agreements in one occupation on the interest of the circumjacent groups. We do not in the long run gain by representing things as simpler than they are. And yet the difficulties should not be the excuse for apathy. No Christian employer or workman ought to be comfortable in his mind if he is not seriously thinking about the matter, and considering whether by this or that improvement in the organization of his trade he cannot smooth the way for joint deliberation between the two great interests if it does not yet take place, or make it more useful if it has in some measure already been introduced.

Councils, boards, and conferences, however, deal with industries as wholes, and prescribe standards of hours and wages throughout the trade ; they are not enough to create satisfactory conditions within the several shops, for reason which recent experience is compelling us to realize. With the spread of education and of the democratic spirit on the one side, and of automatic machinery and repetition work on the other, there is a growing dissatisfaction with the merely authoritative method of workshop government, and with the imposition of even the best "welfare" arrangements by mere fiat from

above. What the greatest economists like Adam Smith have united with the artists and moralists like Ruskin to point out—the belittling and benumbing effect of extreme division of labour—is going to make itself visible and resented the more that “process” work and “repetition” extends; and yet the further application of machinery is clearly necessary for the larger production which will make possible higher wages and greater material comfort. There are some who think the problem how to restore interest to a man’s working hours is insoluble; who hold that, from the point of view of the vital interests of a human mind, the modern workshop must be given up as hopeless; that the only thing to aim at is such a shortening of working hours as will leave men time and energy for a truly human life outside the shop. We must all agree that life should be so ordered that there shall be time for family intercourse, for recreation, for friendship. But however short the working day may be made, it must always occupy a large part of the waking hours of the great body of the people.

Discipline must be maintained: that is true. But when an imposed discipline is justified on the analogy of the army, there is this to be observed: the public function of industrial

labour is indeed quite as real as that of service in the army, but it is not so evident. Moreover, the authority from whom disciplinary rules proceed in industry is commonly one whose natural and necessary motive is business profit. This is not a condemnation but an explanation. And the result is that the demand for obedience cannot, in the nature of the case, meet with so willing a response. The problem is how to make shop-discipline, so far as may be, self-discipline, or rather corporate discipline ; and how to secure the co-operation of the work-people themselves in the improvement of their daily surroundings. I do not profess to solve this problem ; I only wish to urge it upon your attention as Christian men and women. It is one of which we are certain to hear more in the future.

THE DUTY OF THOUGHT

Birmingham Cathedral, 1922

THE one word which sums up what I am going to say comes at the end of the well-known lyrical passage in the letter of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians :—

“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,
Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure,
Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,
If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,
Think on these things.”

“On these things, think.” That is the word : Think ! The Christian duty of using our intellects is one to which far too little attention has been given. And, whatever may have been the case in past ages, it is a duty peculiarly incumbent upon us in the times in which we now live. For the Christian teacher and the Christian believer are confronted by problems which they cannot shirk if the Christian view of life is to remain a real force in the affairs of men ; and

these problems they cannot wisely deal with without thought—thought protracted, thought consecutive, thought sometimes even distasteful. Let me touch upon two of the most important.

There is, first, what is called the labour question. I am not going to advocate any particular conclusion. All I want to urge is that it calls for the use of our brains; for it is not, by any manner of means, easy to understand. And the Christian use of our brains in this connexion means several things. It means that we should abstain from hasty and off-hand judgments. This is a fault to which we are all prone; it is hardly necessary to give examples. Remember only how often, among the employing classes and those who sympathize with them, stupidity and laziness and agitation for agitation's sake are ascribed to "Labour"; and how often, with many workmen and those who sympathize with them, "Capital" is credited with greed and profiteering and "exploitation." That these things on either side are often present I am not concerned to deny; but they are not, in my judgment, adequate explanations of the stage we have now reached in industrial conditions. Or, if it is thought possible that they

are—for I should be sorry to seem to prejudge any issue—it is at any rate our duty as Christians not to proclaim our opinion until we have, for a time, painstakingly given our minds to the subject.

And the difficulties of the industrial situation suggest a second thought. The characteristic message of Christianity—its “new” commandment—is love: love to God and love to man. Love to God, we are taught, is best shown by love to man; “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?” And again, “Let us love one another, for . . . every one that loveth, knoweth God.” “Love,” indeed, is an emotional word; perhaps a little unreal to many of us. Let us, then, substitute for “Love” some such phrase as this, “An unselfish desire for the true well-being of others.” That is the beginning of the Christian life. But it is only the beginning. Such an emotion is positively harmful—or rather it does not genuinely exist, but only its counterfeit—unless it stimulates us to the effort, and among other efforts to the effort of thought, which is necessary to bring about that true well-being. We repeat easily enough the great saying: “Seek ye first the

kingdom of God, and all these things"—the material needs of human life—"shall be added unto you." But a glow of emotion, a warm feeling inside one, a moist eye as social ideals rise before our imagination, these are not "seeking." "Seeking" is a toilsome, and it may be a long, endeavour of brain as well as of heart.

I have said I should not advocate any particular conclusion. But I will venture to lay before you for your consideration one way at any rate in which the industrial situation may be reasonably viewed. Industrial organization, like social organization in general, seems to me largely a matter of unconscious evolution; largely the result of inherent forces. But the accompaniments of the development—the temper of those involved, the friction and amount of wreckage—do appear to me to depend largely on the conscious human will. I say this not without reference to some of the chief industrial conflicts in which Birmingham has recently been involved. It is possible to see in these conflicts opportunities for Christian men not only to insist on their present "rights," which I do not call in question, but also to carry out a duty—the duty of taking a long view, of forecasting the future,

of considering what they can positively contribute to ease the passage of inevitable changes.

The other problem on which I wish to touch is that of religion. The churches are faced by the necessity to find an expression for eternal truths—if such there be, and I, for my part, believe there are—which shall be consistent with the scientific knowledge and expressed in the forms of thought of to-day. Christian thinkers have had similar tasks before, as when the men of the seventeenth century learnt that the earth is not the fixed centre of the material universe; or when our grandfathers were told by geology and biology that mankind arose from lower forms of life by a process which occupied millions of years. But the intellectual needs of to-day are the more insistent because of the convergence now of two streams of thought. One, as before, is the scientific in the ordinary sense of the term—that coming from physical and biological studies. These do not so much inculcate as assume an order of nature—an order which consists of cause and effect. With the spread of education, with the growing absorption of our people in avocations which visibly rest on the achievements of modern science, the coming generation will be less and

less attracted to forms of religious teaching which represent Divine Power as suspending, or thrusting aside, natural law. Such "interferences" will not so much come to be consciously "disbelieved," as no longer thinkable. Unless our young people can be helped to see an Eternal Purpose working through, not against, natural law, it is to be feared they will not see it at all.

The other and converging movement of thought is also scientific, but in the wider sense of the term. It comes from the critical and historical study of the Christian sacred writings. This began in this country some sixty years ago, with the work especially of Bishop Colenso, who was then regarded as a dreadful heretic, but whose main conclusions as to the "Books of Moses" are now accepted by educated clergy of every church and school.

It was the great service of the first Bishop of this diocese, Dr. Gore, whose statue stands near the door of this church, that in the epoch-making book called "*Lux Mundi*," published in 1889, he threw the mantle of his high character and scholarly authority over those—in our own and in other communions—who were trying to see the Hebrew Scriptures as they

really were. But this movement of scholarly thought cannot stop with the Old Testament. The history and composition and true meaning of the New Testament must be studied with the same thoroughness and the same openness of mind. We may find that its writers are not always consistent one with another; that their statements are not always good evidence; that their profound religious insight did not always divert them from unconvincing lines of argument. The great saying of Paul about himself and the early believers is true of the Scriptures which he and they were then writing. They are "earthen vessels," yet they do, indeed, as I believe, contain a "treasure." And that treasure we should be justified in describing in modern language which would be but a translation of Paul's own words: "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

I am not one of those who are pessimistic, either about our industrial or our religious future. I do not believe there was ever a time when the great body of our people were as moral as they are now, or when the essential ideas of Christianity had penetrated so far and so generally into the consciences of ordinary men and

women. I cannot but believe that, in the eyes of a Moral Governor of the universe, to use an eighteenth-century phrase, the English people of to-day are more "well-pleasing" than they ever were in the so-called "Ages of Faith." And hence I am very hopeful that the churches will emerge from a period of unsettlement with a more rational faith, and with forms of worship which shall be as beautiful as those of to-day, but more real; with the pure gold of religion purged from the dross of a lower morality and of outworn conceptions of the Deity. For if our religious services are to help, as they might, our working people and our young and thoughtful men and women of every class along that road of life which is commonly so full of happiness and yet is often so very difficult, they must be far less archaic both in thought and expression. They must give utterance, in the speech of to-day, to the truest teaching and the noblest feeling that, by the providence of God, we have come to know and feel. But we cannot expect to get this all at once, or without patience with one another and serious deliberation.

Has it ever occurred to you that in the New Testament "the Will of God" is most commonly brought before us, not as something we are

simply to submit to, but as something we are actively to do ? The point of view from which most of the New Testament is written is that a Heavenly Father has a purpose for us which He can only carry out by our help. There is moral and physical evil in the world—that we have got to recognize, however it came there ; and it helps us little to philosophize about it. I do not expect men will ever find in this life an explanation of evil which will entirely satisfy their hearts as well as their minds. Our more practical business is not to explain evil, but to overcome it. And it is the characteristic of the religion of Christ that it does not—like so much Oriental religion—call upon us merely to submit and bow the head before untoward outward happenings—murmuring “ Kismet,” or “ Thy Will be done,” in a spirit of unintelligent fatalism. We have got to use our reason, to discriminate, to judge which among our troubles can be in accordance with the Will of a Heavenly Father.

Our Master said emphatically about the little children around Him—thinking, it may be, of the ruin which was about to befall the Jewish people and the horrors of war—“ It is not the will of your Heavenly Father that one of these

little ones should perish." It is not His Will that the little children around us should suffer from any preventable evil. And what are we all but children of a larger growth ?

There is a phrase of Bishop Wilson's which Matthew Arnold was fond of quoting. Our duty, said Wilson, is "to make reason and the Will of God prevail"; that is, reason *is* the Will of God. And that brings me back to my starting-point. We have got to employ our intellects to find out the Will of God and to discover the means for its realization., "I beseech you, brethren," says Paul, writing to the Church at Rome, "that ye be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God." King James' version hardly brings out Paul's meaning: to "prove" sounds like the finding of reasons for that of which we are already informed. What is generally recognized as the best modern English version gives the exhortation thus :

"Have your mind renewed, and so be . . . able to make out what the Will of God is—namely, what is good and acceptable to Him, and perfect."

That which, using the best judgment we have

we find to be “good”; that which, in the words of my text, we can recognize—it may be only after much anxious thought—to be “true” and “honest” and “just” and “pure” and “lovely,” that is the Will of God. J

FREEDOM AND SERVICE

St. James' Cathedral, Toronto, 1924

"The truth shall make you free."—JOHN viii, 32.

"Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."—GALATIANS v, 13.

"FREEDOM" or "liberty"—two words for the same thing, the one of English, the other of Latin origin—are among the great words of humanity, of like magnitude with "home" and "love" and "duty" and "law." How they have inspired men and women to dare and to suffer! And yet what crimes have been wrought in their name!

I shall not try to set forth even the chief among the conceptions which men have attached to "freedom" or "liberty"; that would be to embark on difficult chapters of ethics and political philosophy. But there are some reflections which we may properly make. And one is that it is worth while to be clear as to the sense in which Christianity may be said to have come into the world as a gospel of liberty. That it was so presented is writ large in the New

Testament. It was because it sought, first of all, to emancipate the human spirit from the complicated system of taboos as to meats and days which had come to clog the pure monotheism of the Hebrews. And next, because it went out to liberate the Mediterranean world from its dread of malign superhuman powers—the “spirit-forces of evil.” And, finally, because it taught all mankind to dominate animal instincts ; to

“work out the Beast,
And let the Ape and Tiger die.”

It never aimed at freeing men from burdens of conscience or spiritual terrors simply to leave the “natural” man free to follow his own unregulated passions and desires—his own “lusts.” It never conceived of human selfishness and folly as on the whole working out for the good of society, in spite of regrettable excesses which could be regarded as necessary drawbacks in the execution of an all-wise Divine scheme. The doctrine of “natural liberty” that was taught by Adam Smith and the philosophers of the eighteenth century, has no doubt a good deal to say for itself ; it used, also, sincerely enough, some part of the

language of religion. And the doctrine, on the other hand, of the New Testament in general, and of St. Paul in particular, as to the contrast between flesh and spirit, or the necessity for a new birth, though justified by the experience of the early Church, and of countless men and women since, may require supplementing if it is to be entirely and permanently wholesome. But the two views at bottom are very different and can never be made to harmonize. The "liberty" of the New Testament was a freedom from a lower law imposed from outside, and from the lower impulses arising from physical heredity. It was the necessary stage before men could lay upon themselves a higher law, approved by their own enlightened spirits. And what brought men and women to this liberty was "the truth."

In the language of the New Testament "the truth" meant much more than the accurate knowledge of measurable material things, of external happenings, or of literary records. But it may rightly be regarded as including it. And as there is now meeting in this city an Association for the Advancement of Science, that is to say, of systematic knowledge, it may be appropriate if we consider some instances of

the liberating possibilities of knowledge even of this sort. I shall take my examples from the field of history.

Let us first notice how immensely all those who care for Christian unity have been helped by the recent advances in the study of the New Testament. I am not thinking now of the essential faith of the Christian church, though I am convinced that there also it is true ; I am limiting myself to its visible organization. For centuries not only association in worship, but even really sympathetic relations between the members of various Christian bodies, was hindered by the notion that some form of Church organization had a Divine Right to perpetuity—a position which was maintained by Independents and Presbyterians as strongly as by Episcopalians. The Divine Right of their own particular ecclesiastical constitution was the Old Man of the Sea that sat on our fathers' shoulders and steered them apart when they tried to shake hands with their separatist or prelatist brethren. And so long as we had no thorough study of the New Testament in the scientific spirit in which scholars examine any other literature—that is, to find out all that is actually in it, and not simply to collect proof texts—this state of mind might

continue indefinitely, or until men turned away in contempt or indifference.

Now, the critical study of the New Testament is hardly more than sixty years old. Yet even in its first period—the period in England of Lightfoot and Hort—it did us the great service of showing, simply by a systematic juxtaposition of all the pertinent material, that in New Testament times the sharp antitheses which controversy has drawn did not in fact exist; that elements of episcopacy and presbytery and independency lived interwoven side by side. And in its later period New Testament study has been even more liberating from old prepossessions. I refer, of course, to the work of those recent scholars of whom Schweitzer is the best known. They have opened our eyes to what is conspicuous in the New Testament when once we begin to notice it; that the early church expected the advent, within the lifetime of the first believers, of a Realm of God, descending from above. That was the shape in which, under the intellectual conditions of the time, the aspirations of the primitive church were necessarily clothed.

The characteristic thing about the Christian vision was that it was an ideal of righteousness,

in the most inward but also in the most social sense. But while that is true of the character of the Coming Kingdom, and we need to be reminded of it, it must not obscure in our minds the intense belief of our Lord's followers in its early arrival.

"The early Christians lived in constant anticipation of Christ's imminent return, so that their arrangements were of a provisional nature and no permanent organization was thought of. . . . It is a fact of immense importance and significance that Jesus Himself created no organization. . . . Great value attaches to the freedom of Christianity from a fixed constitution."

This is the language of Professor Peake—and let me say, in passing, that "Peake's Commentary," as it is called, is an encouraging sign of the times; first, because it shows fifty scholars, representing all the great Churches of the English-speaking world (with the exception of those of the Roman obedience), able to co-operate in the elucidation of our Scriptures on a basis of scholarship; and, still more, because of its wide acceptance as a work of reference, especially in our higher schools. I do not suppose every one of those fifty would agree with each word of the sentences I have just quoted. But in substance they express the view that all the younger

scholars of every Protestant church are now coming to. And if this view be true, as I cannot doubt it is, it cuts fundamentally at the root of Divine Right ; for it shows that the idea of a form of organization necessary for future centuries was an idea which could not even have occurred to the early Christians.

Let me turn to that other great field of human interest—the economic—and in this instance to the history more particularly of recent centuries. There also the advance of knowledge has already done something among serious students to free the mind from prejudices and prepossessions, by demonstrating “the falsehood of extremes” ; and I cannot but think that it is capable of exercising this influence in wider circles. For history applies to conservative rigidity and rebellious fanaticism alike the solvents of evolution and relativity. It shows that “property” is not an idea of immutable contents ; that, in the appropriate phrase of Lassalle, it is an “historical category” ; it has grown up in the past and may be modified in the future. It shows that the accumulation and distribution of wealth have been the result of forces and motives both bad and good in their temper and in their effect. It also shows,

however, that the stimulus of individual ownership has in fact given an enormous impulse to human enterprise in conquering the world's material resources ; and that while, on the one hand, competition is in many directions visibly putting an end to itself and facilitating some form of corporate ownership or social control, on the other hand it cannot advantageously be dispensed with by the fiat of a dictatorship, even a proletariat dictatorship, until the time is ripe. It shows that evolution cannot be disregarded, but that it can be hastened and facilitated ; that if we are indeed

“ . . . on all sides o’ershadowed by the high
Un-o’erleap’d mountains of necessity,
Sparing us narrower margin ”

than some deem, they spare us wider margin than others suppose.

It would not be difficult to multiply instances of the emancipating effect of knowledge. But the effect is not necessarily more than negative. With human nature as it is, there is only too much danger that the removal of prejudice may end only in indifference or cynicism ; that, in St. Paul's words, it may be an “ occasion to the flesh ”—to the lower self, that is, which

craves for ease and shuts itself up in self-conceit.

There have been those who have maintained that reformers are the better without knowledge; that fanaticism has the advantage of "getting things done." It was, for instance, at one time common to find the violent but creative Luther compared, entirely to his advantage, with the wiser, but, as it was supposed, impotent Erasmus; or to find the Terror of the French Revolution justified as harsh but necessary surgery of the body politic. But the farther the Reformation recedes into the distance, the more, I think, are the places of Luther and Erasmus in our sympathies being reversed. The Reformation of the church could so conceivably have taken place in a way which should not have provoked the Wars of Religion, and the modern revolt of the laity in Latin countries from the church altogether. And the French Revolution has so evidently left an inheritance of bitterness and social alienation behind it, that it is not as easy as it used to be to pronounce panegyrics upon it.

We have moved far away from the eighteenth-century dread of "enthusiasm"; perhaps we have moved too far away. The world has had

only too frequent occasion to remember the forcible saying: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." Yet the union of knowledge with an active regard for the well-being of our fellows is the most difficult of human ideals.

But does not this reflection indicate the function of the Christian church? The purpose of the Christian church is to help men and women to live a life of love, a life of service, a life which is not a matter of sentiment only, but a matter of endeavour and, if need be, of self-abnegation. To a superficial observer it may perhaps seem that the progress of democracy has curtailed the functions of the church. "Public assistance" is taking the place of almsgiving; and education—for which the churches from one point of view did so much, from another point of view did so little—is passing more and more into the hands of the state. And the church cannot possibly find in the New Testament definite prescriptions to be applied to the practical perplexities of modern industry if only for this reason—that modern industry was altogether beyond the horizon of its writers. The contemporary social environment was fundamentally different; and they

did not contemplate the continuance of "this world" at all.

But all this leaves undiminished the prime function of the church—which is to inspire, to supply motive power, to strengthen the will in the Service of Man. Is it not true that "the world is too much with us"; do we not all of us suffer from what old writers used to call "coldness of heart"? We avoid, we may not be seriously tempted by, the grosser vices; but we become self-centred, immersed in the thousand and one professional or "society" or pleasure interests of the day. Christian worship is the great chance we have to get the ice thawed around our hearts, to be touched anew to sympathy and unselfishness and belief in the possibilities of human nature and human society.

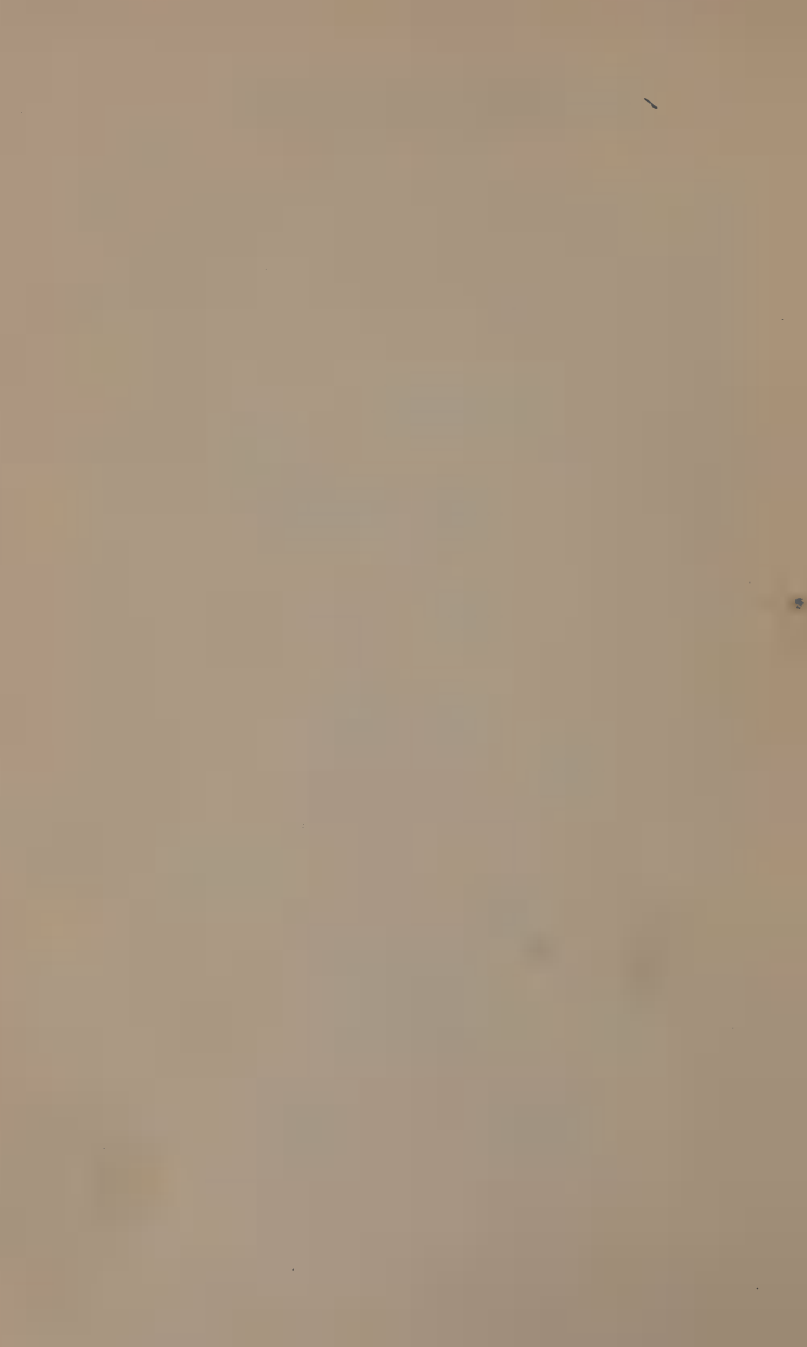
Explain it as we may, the Universe is so constituted that there are sources of help on which we can draw to gain this spiritual renewal. The Christian congregation draws upon them by Thanksgiving, by realizing the blessings which we know we have received if we stop to think about them; by feeling our Fellowship with all those who have believed in a Divine Purpose, with which we are called upon to be fellow-workers; by recalling all that

Sacrifice throughout the ages for the sake of humanity which is centred in the Cross.

And, if this be so, how seriously should those who have influence over the forms of our worship consider their responsibilities ! For the lesson is as appropriate to churches as to individuals ; “ seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses ”—the memories and examples of Christianity when it has been true to itself—“ let us lay aside every weight.” “ We must strip off every handicap,” as a modern translation puts it. And can any of us who know the younger people of this generation deny that most organized churches are, in sad truth, severely handicapped—handicapped by phraseology which is archaic or conventional ; handicapped far worse by the jostling with the religion of Christ of conceptions of the divine nature and government which are unworthy, and at bottom simply pagan ?

The churches went through one period of strain in the sixteenth century when they translated the language of worship into the vernacular of the people. The churches of to-day must re-express their worship in the language of to-day. And, let us not deceive ourselves, it will be a far harder task ; because the advancement of

science, physical and historical, had profoundly transformed our habitual modes of thought concerning the causation of "all things visible." But the duty is clear because the need is clear. And it can be accomplished; it is, indeed, thank God, in course of accomplishment. We may well join in the prayer that organizations, like individuals, may "both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same."



AN OPEN DOOR

Erdington Parish Church, Birmingham, 1922

TO men and women come, from time to time, great opportunities. They come to them as nations, as churches, as individuals: times when obstacles and barriers are removed, and a free course lies before them for some honorable activity. This is a fact of experience for which we need no Bible warrant. But there is a phrase in one of the messages to the Churches of Asia which form the prologue to the last book in the New Testament library, that fitly expresses the thought I have in mind. It is the phrase "Behold, I have set before thee an open door."

The opening door is just the image we may have before us when we consider the younger generation of to-day and the Christian church. The way into the church as a conscious member, the effective entrance into that fellowship whose object is to help us towards the three things which, as Paul said, "abide" or last on—faith and hope and love—has not yet been freed from all unnecessary stumbling-blocks. But the

passage is far freer than it was in my youth. The change is evident in all the great religious bodies of Western Europe and America, with the exception only of those of the Roman obedience. It is much more possible nowadays for young men and women to make their way towards the essentials of the Christian faith and life, without being held back by what used to be represented as preliminary conditions : conditions which rested on views of the divine nature which were dishonouring to God, untaught by Jesus Christ, and increasingly unacceptable to the understanding.

But it is of the Church of England that I want especially to speak. We must recognize the services which the other denominations of Christians have rendered towards our common purpose ; the fact that each, in its best times and in its worthiest representatives, has stood for some important element in the spiritual life or some natural principle of religious association. But you who are here are concerned, I presume, primarily with that organization which still bears the name of the Church of England. That is a name which has a great history behind it, though by no means one on which we can always look back with satisfaction : a history too

full, at times, of sordidness and superstition and class domination. When one thinks of the worldly prelates and clergy of the eighteenth century—though there were great Christians in the English Church in the worst of times, men like the three bishops, Ken and Wilson and Butler; when one remembers the bitter controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the persecutions by Catholics and Protestants, Prelatists and Puritans, alike; when one realizes the way in which the most sacred offices and rites have been secularized and used for mean ends—one may well wonder that the Church of England, as an organization, has survived at all. One cannot but hope that it has been preserved, in spite of all its shortcomings, for some good issue.

And yet, if there is a dark side, there is a bright side to its history. Every churchman and churchwoman who has studied that story will have a different list of the men and women who clung to it and to whom they look back with admiration and gratitude. On my list are Dolling, the friend of the slum dweller; and Barnett, the creator of the "settlement"; and Kingsley, the defender of the Chartists; and Robertson, the true evangelical; and Shaftesbury,

the leader in factory legislation; and Samuel Johnson, the enemy of humbug; and Burnet, the "Latitude" man; and Cudworth, the Platonist; and Hooker, the judicious; and Cranmer, who gave us the rhythms of our Prayer Book; and Colet, the humanist; and the early Franciscans, the first city missionaries; and the Venerable Bede; and the saints of Iona and Holy Isle. Your list may well be different; for the ways have been many in which men and women of the English Church have imitated their Master, and have "gone about doing good." There is much encouragement for all of us in the record of the past. We can hardly be blind, moreover, to the present merits of the parochial system, with its network all over the country; to the dear associations of our parish churches; to the sobering and restful dignity of our cathedrals. These create a fund of memories, sources of inspiration, "means of grace," for which we can be immensely thankful; and which can surely be made vastly more stimulating and helpful. The problem for us is this: how, without losing touch with the past, while still cherishing forms and ceremonies which have endeared themselves to our forefathers, we can find room in the Church for

the needs of a democratic and intellectually independent age.

Now quite recently the English Church door has been conspicuously opened wider, in two respects ; or perhaps I ought to change the figure and say two doors, the door of government and the door of worship.

By the Enabling Act and the subsequent measure conferring powers upon Parochial Church Councils, the English Church has recently become self-governing in a new and modern sense. When the church and the nation were, not only in theory but largely in fact, but two aspects of the same population, the government of the church, first by the Crown and afterwards by the Parliament, could be justified as in a real sense "self-government." But we have to recognize that the Church of England is now, in fact, but the largest of the English "denominations" of Christians. It is but bare justice that those who are members of that church in an active sense should have a very considerable part in the government of its affairs. And that the "Life and Liberty" movement has obtained ; not an absolutely unmixed good, possibly, but the necessary condition, under modern circumstances, for whole-

some life and further progress. The powers of the old vestries have been transferred to parochial councils, representing in effect not those living in geographical parishes but those worshipping habitually in the several church edifices. I do not think it is commonly understood how wide is the church franchise. Any person can be placed, at his or her request, on the electoral roll who is over eighteen years of age, has been baptized in the name of the Trinity, by whomsoever it may have been, and who does not formally belong to any other religious body. I could wish the conditions of entrance were even more magnanimous and trustful; but, as things are, the present requirements probably keep very few out who would be inclined to enter. For membership of the parochial council the men and women elected must indeed be communicants, but no fresh doctrinal test is imposed beyond that implied in Confirmation; and this it is the practice of sensible clergy to interpret with a wide liberality. Even more in this case would I, personally, desire more widely opening arms; but, owing to the fortunate circumstance that confirmation comes in early youth, the restriction will in practice seldom operate as a barrier. The destinies of the

Church of England are being put into the hands of those who care enough for it to attend its services and to join their fellows at the Lord's Table. And they will have a right and a duty to make their voices heard. There is need for the frank expression of the points of view of all intelligent and serious-minded men and women. There are obvious reforms still waiting to be carried out on which lay opinion will have to decide.

From the door of Government let us turn to the other door, the door of Worship. No one can value more than I do the substance of our liturgy. But until recently our services have contained elements which have been serious stumbling-blocks in the way of thoughtful people, and which, as I know, have helped to keep them from hearty co-operation. The Psalms often reach the very loftiest heights of worship and aspiration ; but many of them are of little religious value, and some few verses here and there are positively wicked, opposed to all that our Lord came to teach us. It is a great gain that of late the minister has been allowed to choose the psalms to be used, instead of being tied to the psalms of the day. Some of the lessons from the Old Testament were

unedifying or demoralizing ; and some of those from the New Testament were made up of argumentation which even professed scholars find it very difficult to explain. The New Lectionary is therefore a great help towards a more truly Christian worship, which will use the Bible not as a talisman but as a help toward the religious life.

I have great hopes also from the revision of the Prayer Book. It has been thrown back so often that one dares not be sanguine ; when it does come, it can hardly fail to give a greater freedom of choice which parsons can employ for the benefit of their congregations.

But it is remarkable to what an extent our awakening by the Great War has taught the clergy of all schools to use the Prayer Book with more discrimination, and to enrich our services with litanies, meditations, and thanksgivings of recent origin. I would like to express our obligation to the compilers of that reverent collection of "Acts of Devotion" which has already received so wide and authorized an acceptance. The introduction of such alternatives or supplements will not, I am sure, diminish the appeal to our hearts and consciences of the more beautiful of our ancient collects.

They shine out the more, they reveal fresh meanings, when they are associated with newer devotions which seek to give expression to spiritual wants, unknown, or at any rate unexpressed, in earlier centuries.

We do not want to break away from all that is old: in the old language all the essential Christian ideas have found some expression. But if we are to keep our young people in an age of personal liberty and scientific education; if we are to draw to us, for what we think the Christian church has to give of comfort and guidance, the working people who now so largely remain outside all religious organizations—we must let more light and air into our churches, more reality, more of the language and thought of our own time.

I do not know whether there are any here of the younger generation—there are many thousands not in church—who are coming to regard the Church of England, as indeed all churches, as just a survival from the past; a thing they pay some outward respect to, because they do not want to pain their elders; but not a thing which really means anything to them. To such I would say: the Church of England is waking into new life; it is adjusting itself to

human needs ; it does invite men and women of intelligence and goodwill to join in its worship and in its work. It is still the greatest society in the land for doing good and helping its members to be good. You can do far more to help things along in the way you must wish, for your own strengthening and for the benefit of your generation, by coming in and making yourselves felt than by staying outside and criticizing. It is a great opportunity.

THE OUTWARD AND THE INWARD

Llanbedr Parish Church, North Wales, 1913

WE may let our reflections gather themselves this evening around two famous sentences. With one a noble psalm opens: "The heavens declare the glory of God"; or, as it is sung in the great chorus of Haydn, "The heavens are telling." The other is the saying of our Lord: "The kingdom of God is within you."

The question must sometimes have suggested itself to many of us: What is it that does most to awaken and strengthen our better selves? What is it which best enables us to form worthy ideals, and stimulates us most effectively to carry them out! The question has presented itself to thoughtful men and women in many ages of the world's history. And it happens that recent explorations have brought to light an instructive instance, both of the asking of the question and of an answer to it, in the early days of the Christian Church. Scholars have lately unearthed, in the rubbish heaps outside the ancient cities of Egypt, several fragments

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of writing belonging to the first centuries of the Christian society. One of them runs as follows :

“Jesus saith : Ye ask who are those that draw us to the Kingdom. The fowls of the air, and all beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea, these are they that draw you ; and the kingdom of heaven is within you ; and whosoever shall know himself shall find it. Strive, therefore, to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Father.”

The context of the saying about the kingdom as it appears in the narrative of Luke has given rise to certain modern doubts as to the original sense of the word actually used by Jesus—the word rendered by the Greek preposition translated *within*. But it is clear that what the Christian to whom we owe the preservation of the tradition just quoted understood by it is the inward, spiritual, sense which *within you* will naturally suggest.

Who and what, then, are they that do in fact draw us men and women of to-day to the kingdom—to those moral ideals which, taught by Jesus, we recognize as the highest : that kingdom of God which, as Paul reminds us, consists in nothing merely external but in “righteousness and peace and joy” ? The answer that may well

suggest itself, in these surroundings of mountain and stream and ocean, is the same in substance as that given centuries before. The wonders of what we call "Nature" should surely draw us towards the highest and best. And to us of to-day "Nature" is even more deeply moving than it was to people of old. The Hebrews, as we know from their Psalms, were awed by the majesty of the overarching sky, and taught thereby to believe in a divine Maker. "The firmament sheweth His handiwork"—that firmament which was a fit tent for the sun. The spectacle of the moon and stars inspired them with humility: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" The great elemental forces they could picture as the servants of a Supreme Power: "fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storm, fulfilling His word." But what came nearer to their hearts was animate nature: as also in the lately discovered saying we are now considering, with its thought of the fowls and the beasts and the fishes. They loved to think of "the rivers that run among the hills" and "the cedars of Libanus," and "the stony rocks," not so much for their own sake, but rather as "quenching the thirst of the wild asses," as a habitation for "the fowls of the air

who sing among the branches," as "a refuge" for the goats and the conies. This is the child's and the childlike views of "Nature." But to us of a later age the pageantry of land and sky and sea is far richer in majesty and delight. Poets like Wordsworth and teachers like Ruskin and painters like Turner have opened our eyes to beauties which had not been seen even a hundred and fifty years ago. The interplay of light and shade, the cloud effects, the shimmer of the waters, the shapes of the mountains, the colours of the landscape, the dancing of flowers in the breeze—all make a new and poignant appeal to us.

Does Nature, thus conceived, in honest truth draw *us* to the kingdom? Surely, it *can* do so. In the midst of these mountains and seas, unaffected by men's hands, spreading themselves forth beneath the sky for untellable ages, whether human beings have been here to see them or not, it might seem easier to realize a Power not ourselves than in towns crowded with man's productions. Conscious, as we can hardly fail to be, of the benefit of our annual holiday, the renewed energy of mind and body which we derive from our stay in these health-giving surroundings, can we fail to feel stirrings of gratitude

and must not this gratitude open our hearts to our fellow-men? And often in this place we have visions of such tender and unspeakable beauty—as when the panorama of the Snowdon range stands out blue and purple against the evening sky—that surely we must feel a deeper abhorrence for all that is ugly in human life and social conditions, a fresh conviction that human society can be made more worthy of such a glorious setting.

All this is possible; but let us be frank with ourselves, and let us confess that physical beauty does not always draw us, has not always drawn mankind, to moral beauty. Bunyan was right in more senses than he supposed when he said that upon the Delectable Mountains themselves there was “a by-way to hell.” Even if we have fine emotions, is there not a danger that these emotions may end in themselves? We are only too ready to plume ourselves on our feelings. We thank God unconsciously that we are not as others are, not vulgar or noisy, nor even as these trippers. And yet the final standard—our Lord has told us again and again—is not what we have felt but what we have done for our brethren and His. And, again, is it not true that the very ease with which we better-to-do people

can get away for a time from the sights of city life may actually harden our hearts and lessen our desire to build a City of God among men ? The vicinity of Loch Lomond is not an unmixed blessing to Glasgow. It is only too possible to forget our social duties when our holidays have renewed our strength for the struggle of competition ; or even, after enjoying a month of sea breezes, to grumble because the municipality purposes to buy a little open space for the children of the poor.

And, finally, let us reflect that the great masses of our fellow-men and women do not enjoy these sights. And yet we know that, in the lives of those who have before them every day little but “ the long, unlovely street,” there is frequently a simple unselfishness, a helpfulness, a cheerfulness, a clinging persistently and pathetically to ideals of duty, such as may well shame us whose fortunes seem so much more favourable to virtue.

The lesson is the same as that of the ancient answer I began by quoting. What draws us to the kingdom ? External nature ? Yes, truly, by God’s grace. Yet, “ the kingdom is within you.”

“ For though the giant ages heave the hills
 And break the shore, and evermore
 Make and break and work their will ;
 Though world on world in myriad myriads roll
 Round us, each with different powers,
 And different forms of life than ours,
 What know we greater than the soul ? ”

Let us not be too much impressed even by the visible universe. That something which mankind possesses—alone, so far as we know, of created things—whether we call it soul or reason, by which it determines its own course and sets before itself its own purposes, is of an altogether different order of magnitude. The “ main miracle,” as Tennyson told us, is “ not Matter, not the finite-infinite ” of the external, but

“ that thou art thou,
 With power on thine own act, and on the world.”

And so the answer went on which the writer attributed to Jesus himself : “ The kingdom of heaven is within you ; and whosoever shall know himself shall find it. Strive, therefore, to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Father.”

“ Know thyself ” was a maxim of the Greek philosophers centuries before the coming of our Lord. The early Church here echoes it ; and

we can repeat it with a deeper meaning. We need no morbid introspection ; we need only the most elementary knowledge of our own natures to learn the fundamental Christian lessons, though that knowledge is commonly not reached without pain. In all of us, however we may explain it, there is a conflict between good and evil, between a higher and a lower self. Selfishness, mere regard for our own individual material interests, for our own bodily or even mental pleasures, cannot, if we are intelligent, and if life brings us its ordinary experiences, give us lasting satisfaction. Men and women, in sober fact, are not profited if they gain the whole world and forfeit their better selves. And the more we realize our own natures, the more are we led to believe that between our reason and the ultimate meaning of things there is a deep affinity ; that the whole world-process is a movement towards victory over evil, in which it is our duty and our satisfaction to take part.

Modern science has taught us too much to allow us to take non-human Nature any longer in the quite cheerful and easily optimistic spirit that was once possible. We know too much of its forces untamable by man, too much of the struggle for existence. It is because in Man

we can trace the growth of a moral ideal ; because, if only our eyes are opened, we can see all around us what the New Testament calls " the first-fruits of the Spirit," in human integrity and sympathy and compassion and kindness and devotion to social ideals, that we can interpret the external Universe as, in some sort, the vesture and instrument of a God we can respect rather than dread—a God from Whose life we need not feel alienated. Inward experience it is, far more than any outward show, that from time to time stirs our dull brains, and makes us, even if dimly, " aware that we are the sons and daughters of a Father."

When we come to think of it there is surprisingly little in the New Testament about natural beauty. The essential message of Jesus is not to our æsthetic but to our moral nature. We want to be " sure of God," not by way of logical demonstration but by an experience sufficient for a reasonable venture of faith ; we want to be able to trust that our lives have a meaning which would satisfy us, could we but understand. And what Jesus tells us is that it is the pure in heart that shall " see God," and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness that " shall be filled."

THE PRESENT INDUSTRIAL ORDER

Plymouth Church Congress, 1923

“THE Christian Ideal in industry and business,” the subject assigned to me for this paper, may well mean different things to different people. I want to begin by saying what it ought not to mean : it ought not to mean that there is any industrial system which is specifically Christian in the sense of being inculcated in the Christian scriptures. In that sense it ought to be evident that no form of economic government can lay claim to Divine Right ; just as it is evident that no form of ecclesiastical government—episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational—can lay claim to it. And for the same two reasons. The one is that there are nowhere laid down in the New Testament any definite indications in the matter ; and equally intelligent men can argue ceaseless from isolated texts. By selecting one’s texts, it is possible to make a case for communism ; but also an equally good case for the permanent existence side by side of rich and poor ; for revolutionary violence, or for submission. And

the second reason is even more forcible; it is one of the results of the renewed attempt in our own day to enter into the minds of the first generation of Christians. It is that it could not possibly occur to men who looked for the early advent of a Divine Realm, coming down from above, to concern themselves greatly with the forms of the present earthly society.

Perhaps I shall be told that this is all quite obvious; that nobody nowadays does worry about particular texts; that the Bible is not meant to teach political economy any more than geology; that all that really matters is the principle, the spirit, of New Testament teaching. But I am certain that the Divine Right idea still survives in considerable force, and that in the most opposite quarters. It survives not, perhaps, in an appeal to texts, but in an assumption that particular economic institutions or conceptions are inherently, in their very nature, Christian or un-Christian.

Let us take the greatest of all economic institutions—the institution of private property. The gravest theologians—though not indeed of late in our own communion—have argued even recently that “private property is a natural right.” It is curious what strange bedfellows

an abstract principle will sometimes bring together ; for “the inviolable and sacred right” of property was an article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man which ushered in the French Revolution. The theologians and the French philosophers, it is true, alike proceed to put limits to the abstract principle. But there are a great many members of Christian churches who never stop to define “property” or set limits to it, but regard it as something self-explanatory, and who are prone to jump to the conclusion that what seem to them “attacks on property” are necessarily wicked. I must confess too that there are divines in our own Church, with whom in matters of theology I am in no small sympathy, who sit loosely to the creeds but, in my judgment, over-tightly to the merits of private property.

And over against the people to whom “property” is a blessed word may be set those to whom it is accursed : not commonly, perhaps, that word itself, but what is its consequence in modern society, viz. “Capitalism.” This is the tendency of the young and ardent, just as the other attitude is congenial to the middle-aged and prudent. But, in the light of history and experience, there is just as little inherently

wrong in the bare conception of Capitalism, as there is inherently right in the bare conception of Property. There is neither Divine (or inherent) Right nor Divine (or inherent) Wrong necessarily about either of them.

What has the Christian religion to teach us in reference to our economic life, as in reference to all the rest of our relations to others? Simply this one principle: the duty of Love. It was this that the early church soon came to realize as the characteristic Christian attitude; it was this that was presented to the world with such a fresh intensity of conviction that it might well be called "the new commandment." This was the dominating principle—"the royal law," as it is called by the practical-minded St. James; the all-inclusive principle, even for the theologian St. Paul; for every rule of life for the Christian "is briefly comprehended in this saying namely, Thou shalt love they neighbour as thyself."

"Love" is a fervent word—too fervent for our cold northern temperaments; too dimmed by familiarity. Let us transpose it to a lower key. The primary Christian principle is this and nothing else: that we should have a genuine, a practical, regard for the highest well-being of

others. The form that regard shall take, that is left to our own judgment. We are responsible for the use of our judgment, in given conditions of personal opportunity and of social relations. We are responsible also for the way in which we advocate particular measures ; but what those measures should be we must find out for ourselves. Scripture cannot provide us with them ; nor can the Fathers or the Reformers.

Having said this, however, I will venture to tell you what are my own views : the attitude which I think a man or woman who tries to be a Christian may rightly take up towards the present industrial order. That order is certainly not one of which Property and Competition and Capitalism are completely in possession. But it is one in which they now play a preponderating part. Yet it is one in my judgment, in which the Christian who honestly cares for the truest well-being of others may, provisionally and for the time being, acquiesce ; one which he or she may take part in working.

And for this reason, to begin with. The present order has serious defects ; and certainly no lover of his fellow-men can be satisfied with it. But it has vast merits, which impatient critics are wont to overlook. I think an observer from another

planet, who saw from afar the pygmy race of men busying themselves, as it might well seem, without guidance, on the face of the earth, would be surprised, when he came nearer, to find how successful they have, on the whole, been in extracting from the soil the food and raiment they need for their sustenance. If he visited this country after the interval of a century he would find more people upon it and greater material well-being, and he could hardly think we had made a complete failure of our job. We could, of course, vastly alter for the better the whole of society if a substantial majority of our people were converted to brotherly love—or to public spirit, which is another name for part of it. But the hasty overthrow of the existing system is very unlikely to liberate so large a tide of public spirit and so abundant a supply of directing ability as to bring about, for a long time to come, any improvement on the existing position. A violent upheaval may indeed do great harm—destroying material civilization, and creating a tradition of animosities which will retard further progress. Making every allowance one can for Russia, this does seem to be one of the lessons of its calamities. I acquiesce then in the present order, because,

faulty as it is, I see no probable substitute, in a near future, which is likely to be more successful.

And I acquiesce not only for reasons of immediate expediency, but still more for evolutionary reasons. Thorough-going evolutionism applied to society is fatalism; and I am not a fatalist. I hold that there is much scope for conscious human purpose, for intentional direction of social forces. I can, indeed, no more theoretically reconcile evolution and human control than the philosophers can reconcile necessity and free will. All one can hope for, intellectually, is a working compromise. And surely it is true that social institutions do grow very largely, spontaneously and unconsciously, out of prior conditions; and that this process, though it may be eased and expedited, cannot be altogether dispensed with. Faith can remove mountains, we are told; and there are quite high mountains that even the faith of a comparative few can remove. But to move whole mountain chains the faith of a whole population seems necessary; there are peoples among whom the social reformer or legislator cannot do "many mighty works" "because of their unbelief."

I do not myself expect that Western society will ever be completely socialized, for the motive of personal proprietary interest will always, I think, remain a strong one; and I cannot envisage a world in which its operation will not be necessary to prevent stagnation. If society could ever be completely socialized it would not remain so, unless the evolutionary process came to an end, which is hardly likely with Western peoples. Accordingly, I see no reason why, when we have escaped from the mental limitations of an abstract Individualism, we should encumber ourselves with the limitations of an abstract Socialism. Yet I think that, for some time to come, the path of progress—both unconscious and conscious—will be in the direction of social regulation, and the replacement in certain spheres of what is called private enterprise by public management in one or other of its possible forms. Visibly, beneath our eyes, Capitalism is itself quite spontaneously preparing the way for the state, in some form or other, to take over particular branches of economic activity. The large consolidations of capitalist enterprise are making great fields of action ripe for public control. I acquiesce, therefore, in Competition, because it is so largely engaged in the process

of eliminating itself. I am prepared to wait, not impatiently, for that movement to do its work. But there are wide fields where consolidation has so far made little progress, and others where consolidation may perhaps never be practicable. These I should certainly be in no hurry to interfere with—beyond laying down minimum standards, with which all business enterprise should be called on to conform.

The views I have expressed will, I am afraid, seem disappointing to those who want clearly expressed prescriptions for social maladies. There is no panacea. But may I repeat what I have said about "Love"? What the "Love," which is a Christian duty, does prohibit is the habit of regarding other human beings merely as instruments for our individual purposes. The essentially pagan thing is what Aristotle long ago regarded as the basis of pagan society: the treatment of any other human beings as living tools; as subserving the requirements of our own personality, our pecuniary gain, or our refinement, or even our own spiritual well-being. The man or woman who habitually lives in that frame of mind, about "servants" or work-people or "other classes"—or (let us be honest) about those who should be dearer

to them, wife or husband or child—that man or woman is not a Christian. The principle is simple: “the wayfaring man, though a fool,” is able to recognize it. But its application to life is difficult enough.

“How very hard it is to be
A Christian! Hard for you and me,”

Browning exclaims. And this is as true in the economic sphere as in every other. Christianity is a direction of the will. “We know that we have passed from death unto life,” says a New Testament writer, “because we love the brethren” in reality, and are not merely sentimental about them. Or let us say humbly: we shall know that we are ourselves on the right road when, and so far as, we do in fact care for the best interests of our fellows. That is the first step. It is the only step towards an ideal society that Christianity can teach us. But it is the first step, and that matters most.

THE MODERN STUDENT

Birmingham University Christian Union, 1917

WE are living in the midst of a reaction against all outward expressions of religion that are sharply dogmatic in creed or harshly restrictive of conduct. Young men and women—especially young men and women of the student class—will accept no belief on authority; they will refrain from no behaviour which seems to them pleasurable and innocent. It is freedom they desire: freedom to use the faculties of mind and body with which they feel themselves endowed. Reaction always means excess in the new direction; and the attitude of the younger generation may occasionally strike some of us older people as a shade too confident and self-centred. But I have no doubt that the reaction in itself is a wholesome one—a necessary stage in the spiritual development of the race.

And yet, with all the independence of the normal student, all the kicking against being “done good to,” all the dislike for conventional language, there is, I am sure, a silent

craving in many minds for some sort of help, some sort of fellowship, in the deep things of life. For very many of our young men and women the student years are years of unsettlement, of inward conflict, of danger in temper and habits. This cannot be avoided: it is bound up with the very nature of a university as distinguished from a school or seminary. For the first time they find themselves treated as capable of exercising a free judgment, alike as to what they shall think and as to what they shall do. The air of the university cannot but be full of what to very many will be disturbing thoughts. If they can avoid philosophy or science, they can hardly escape from the world's great literature or the world's astounding history, and all the questions which they suggest as to the meaning of life and human destiny. The mere fact that university students are preparing for careers forces upon them the thought of competition and of the struggle for existence. And to these perplexities of the intellect are added the temptations, which are sure to come in their way, towards failure even in the immediate duties of the student's life. It is not possible for a university—and, if possible, it would not be desirable—so to regulate the

tasks of every day that there shall be no wide margin of time, which the student is left free to use or misuse. In these troubles and dangers young men and women will usually not turn to their parents for guidance ; and they will usually resent interference by them with their conduct. Some of us parents are not good enough and, if good enough, not tactful enough to be of much use to our children in these years of transition and stress. In any case the difference of a generation is a great barrier. We older people cannot feel things in quite the same way ; we do not even use quite the same language. And then as to churches and chapels ; even if students have been associated with them before they came to the university, they are often unable or disinclined to turn to them in their student life for help of any kind to mind or heart. They are naturally very critical, and often terribly clear-sighted as to the defects of professedly religious people or bodies. The only fellowship to which they are drawn at that stage is the comradeship of fellow-students, men and women who also have their lives before them with the same difficulties and problems.

This being so, a Christian Union of students in a university seems to me in a position to

render unique and welcome service. It can furnish a quiet retreat, apart from the bustle of the lecture-rooms and corridors and debates and athletics, where, for a space, instead of argument there will be tranquillity and rest; a place, where, quietly and without clamour, the Christian message will be repeated—that there is a God who is a God of Love; in other words, that this universe has somehow a meaning, and that that meaning is man's highest good. The union will not, if it is wise, be very ambitious in the direction of apologetics: it will not seek to argue down the agnostic. Men and women do not always want to be argued with; but they are often glad enough, if only they are allowed and not worried by questions, to share for a time an atmosphere of faith.

And the atmosphere of faith is the atmosphere of duty. I will not speak of what are called the grosser sins. We may keep quite free from them; and yet we do not always find it easy to know our duty; and when we know it, our wills are often too weak to perform it. And doing it, we may be weary or despondent and out of heart within, even if we think it good form or dignified not to show it. The Christian Union, without setting up to put us all right, can

strengthen the will and open the eyes and give new courage, by taking the mind for a time on to a higher plane than that of the momentary self. It can so surround us by the cloud of witnesses to the beauty of goodness, so remind us of the needs of others, that foolish self-indulgence will appear mean and despicable. We may there begin anew to learn that first and last lesson—to do the best we know how and then to leave the issue to the Power that made us.

We cannot be sufficiently thankful that the path of the Christian life is far less beset than it was in my youth by obstacles put in the way by those who call themselves Christians. There has been a widespread movement in the Churches towards a simpler, a less introspective, a more hopeful religion; towards deeper affirmations than the words which divide us; towards a direction of the will to a common purpose rather than to the attainment of intellectual agreement. This movement the Christian Unions of the universities have not only shared, they have also led; and this is what makes one think they may have a large part to play in the future.

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NOTE

S*OME of these sermons and addresses were printed soon after delivery in various journals and magazines. They have now been revised, in most instances only verbally, and in no case so as to affect the substance. Any profit from the present publication will be passed on to the Birmingham Settlement, in which my wife was long and deeply interested.*

Wm. Ashley

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